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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: USA Henry A. Kissinger  
Assistant to the President  
for National Security Affairs  
  
Brent Scowcroft  
Deputy Assistant to the President  
for National Security Affairs  
  
Lawrence S. Eagleburger *LS*  
Deputy Assistant to the President  
for National Security Council  
Operations  
  
PRC Ambassador Huang Chen  
  
Mr. Chi (interpreter)  
  
DATE, TIME & PLACE: July 6, 1973 - 10:00 a.m.  
Dr. Kissinger's Office  
Western White House

Ambassador Huang: I am very happy to see you here.

Dr. Kissinger: We are very happy to have you here though I must apologize for the weather.

You will meet people at the dinner tonight who no longer exist in the PRC. I have selected them for their impact on U.S. life. They have public influence and will talk for two years about their meeting with you. Danny Kaye will be there. He is a great Chinese cook. Remember if he mentions it tonight that I told you of his love for China and his great ability as a Chinese cook.

Ambassador Huang: I want to thank you for the many fine arrangements that have been made for my trip. It is timely that I come now; a week from now I would not be able to make it. I have just received instructions to return to Peking for a period of time. I will probably be there to welcome you when you arrive.

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Dr. Kissinger: When you leave people will begin to suspect that things may be happening. I will look forward to seeing you in Peking. I am now proposing to you that I arrive in Peking on August 6, and stay for three or four days.

Ambassador Huang: So far as we can tell, the reports of your prospective visit to Peking came from here. We know some foreign press agencies in Peking reported on your possible visit, but nothing came from our Government. (Interruption for a few moments as Mrs. Huang entered the room.)

Dr. Kissinger: We have reports that my friend, the Vice Minister, has been talking to some diplomats. But he did it under some provocation. It is all right; we don't object.

Ambassador Huang: I don't know of anything along those lines.

Dr. Kissinger: It is better for your allies if they are surprised. It improves their disposition.

Ambassador Huang: We would welcome you any time.

Dr. Kissinger: Well, we started the reports here; it is our fault. Would August 6 be all right?

Ambassador Huang: I will report back home. You said for three or four days?

Dr. Kissinger: Perhaps three and, if necessary, I will stay a fourth day.

Ambassador Huang: That would, of course, be up to you.

Dr. Kissinger: We can settle that later if we agree to a starting date.

Ambassador Huang: I will report immediately. Since I leave on the 10th, Han Hsu can report back to you if there is word.

Dr. Kissinger: We should announce it soon since the speculation is so great.

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Ambassador Huang: When would you like to announce it?

Dr. Kissinger: How about the 12th? We can wait until the 16th if you have another suggestion.

Ambassador Huang: I will report both dates. (Huang then talked at some length in Chinese with Mr. Chi.)

Dr. Kissinger: Before Mr. Chi translates, let me ask a question. Is the Ambassador a General?

Ambassador Huang: Certainly.

Dr. Kissinger: That's what I thought but someone argued with me that you were not.

Ambassador Huang: I was in the same profession as General Scowcroft.

Dr. Kissinger: One thing I have noticed about the U.S. Army is that there are very many intelligent colonels and very few intelligent generals. I have been watching for Scowcroft's deterioration ever since he was promoted to General.

Ambassador Huang: From the standpoint of generals, I can say that there should be more intelligent generals. As you know, we have removed all ranks in our army.

Dr. Kissinger: The General's union. I didn't give you a chance to translate, Mr. Chi.

Ambassador Huang: While we are on the subject of speculation, let me discuss the visit of Prime Minister Chou En-Lai to the U.S. There has been a great deal of speculation in the press, including one report on June 27 from San Clemente that the Prime Minister might consider a visit to the Western White House since it would not be so detrimental to our "principled stand."

Dr. Kissinger: You must understand that we had nothing to do with those stories.

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Ambassador Huang: The U. S. side must understand that it still has relations with the Chiang group. Last year a message of congratulations was sent to Chiang from President Nixon, and the Chiang group still has an embassy in Washington. Under these conditions, how would it be possible for our Prime Minister to visit the U. S. ? A visit to San Clemente would only be using the side door or the back door. I should also tell you that the Prime Minister has no plans to visit the UN.

Dr. Kissinger: The stories did not come from us. We have always officially denied them.

Ambassador Huang: My personal recommendation is that it is beneficial when Ziegler says there are no grounds for such speculation, as he recently did.

Dr. Kissinger: That's our position. As the President has said, he is willing to visit China again. But it would be difficult for us when there is no intermediate meeting in Washington. It would have eased matters if something took place between the first Presidential visit to Peking and the next Presidential visit, which we are prepared to do in 1974.

Ambassador Huang: This can be discussed in Peking.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes; we will stop all speculation in the meantime. How should we proceed? We have a number of concrete problems to discuss. I want to review the Brezhnev visit and one particular matter arising from it. Further, there are Cambodia, Korea, and a number of minor things.

Ambassador Huang: I'll finish up and then listen to you. The other thing I want to discuss is Cambodia. I have a paper here to give you. (Hands over paper, text of which follows.)

"The Chinese side informed the U. S. side earlier that as Samdech Norodom Sihanouk was visiting in Africa and Europe, it was yet infeasible for the Chinese side to communicate to him U. S. tentative thinking on a settlement of the Cambodian question. Although the Chinese side had informed the U. S. side that negotiations between Samdech Sihanouk and the Phnom Penh traitorous clique would be impossible, the U. S. side nevertheless openly refused to negotiate with Samdech Sihanouk, which enraged him all the more. However, according to news reports, U. S. government

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officials have recently made some disclosures on this question, which have given rise to various speculations. At the same time, it is learned that the Lon Nol clique has gone to the length of spreading the rumour that the Phnom Penh authorities will enter into official negotiations with the National United Front of Cambodia very soon, with the United States and the Chinese Communists serving as go-betweens. In spreading such utterly groundless assertions, the Lon Nol clique harbours ulterior motives, widely attempting to confuse public opinion and forestall the settlement of the Cambodian question. The Chinese side is of the view that such a turn of events is extremely disadvantageous to seeking a settlement of the Cambodian question and will even cause trouble. The Chinese side cannot but bring this to the serious attention of the U. S. side."

Ambassador Huang: This message was received before Prince Sihanouk returned to Peking.

Dr. Kissinger: (reading paper) He is certainly enraged.

Ambassador Huang: Since you always indicated in the past that you didn't want to talk to him, he is angry.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes, but you have received several communications from us. These were before his return to Peking.

Ambassador Huang: Now that Sinahouk has returned to Peking, we will hand over your thinking to him.

Dr. Kissinger: I gather he had not received this by the time of his arrival.

Ambassador Huang: By the looks of it, no.

Dr. Kissinger: I did not know that the Prime Minister could speak French.

Ambassador Huang: He was in France.

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Dr. Kissinger: I had forgotten. He made some comments in French about us.

Let me give you our view on Cambodia. First, we cannot control what the Lon Nol people are saying. But they do not know what we have said to you; the proposals we have made to you. It is just speculation on their side.

I want to speak frankly. What we have proposed to you -- a ceasefire, if necessary for only 90 days, we believe takes care of the situation. We have no interests in Cambodia other than what the Prime Minister said to Ambassador Bruce the first time he saw him. This is our objective. We have no objection -- in fact, we would welcome it -- if the Government in Phnom Penh is on very friendly terms with Peking and would refuse to participate in great power hegemonial activities in Southeast Asia.

As I have expressed before, it is a delicate problem for us as to how to manage the transition. If we are pushed into an undignified position, it will only strengthen the forces in this country who will oppose other things we may judge it necessary to do over the next three or four years. So we think it important that the matter in Cambodia be ended in a way not necessarily wounding for the U.S. We take great care not to embarrass you publicly. We really think it is not in our interest to create a situation which is unnecessarily difficult for either side.

Ambassador Huang: I will report this to my Government. Our attitude has already been made clear by the Prime Minister to Ambassador Bruce. As the Prime Minister said, all sides should respect Cambodia's sovereignty. We cannot negotiate about Cambodia. That must be between you, those now in power in Phnom Penh, and Sihanouk.

Dr. Kissinger: We're not asking to negotiate with you, but we have made suggestions as the basis for a solution. If the Prince proposes a ceasefire before my arrival we could stop bombing, and then reach a solution satisfactory to everyone's needs.

Ambassador Huang: It is up to the Prince. It is not for us to predict.

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Dr. Kissinger: No, but our thinking could be mentioned to him.

Ambassador Huang: I can only report. It depends thereafter on my Government.

Dr. Kissinger: Of course.

Ambassador Huang: The Prince said a great deal at the airport.

Dr. Kissinger: I know. The guns have been going off all over Peking these days. The Prime Minister, for example, made some remarks to our Congressional delegation the other day.

Ambassador Huang: I have not seen this.

Dr. Kissinger: I'm not criticizing. He bracketed us, but he hasn't hit us yet.

Ambassador Huang: We haven't heard anything of this.

Dr. Kissinger: No? What he said was in the spirit of what you said before. It was new to the Congressmen, but not to us.

Let me say a few words about Brezhnev. I take it rather seriously. I want to tell it to you as it happened. I want first to discuss our conversations about China. Brezhnev sought for a week to see the President without me.

Ambassador Huang: You are a dangerous man.

Dr. Kissinger: Brezhnev is persistent but not subtle. He did see the President for about 30 minutes alone at Camp David. His comments about China were not favorable, but you may know that. But on the last day -- on Saturday -- Brezhnev had three hours with the President at which I was present. We talked about China at great length. It was his initiative. During the first part of the meeting he violently attacked the Chinese leadership and gave us his explanation of the Lin Piao affair. I won't discuss that unless you want me to.

Ambassador Huang: It's up to you.

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Dr. Kissinger: It was in that context that he told us about the non-aggression treaty about which you had already informed us. He said he would publish it at a suitable interval after his return as an example of the bellicosity of the PRC.

On Lin Piao, the only thing that may be of interest is that he said he would be prepared to let us see their investigative report. We said we were not interested.

He then discussed a number of things. He said it would be intolerable to imagine a Chinese nuclear capability in 15 years equal to what the Soviets have today. This, he said, would be intolerable and unacceptable to the USSR. He suggested we cooperate on this problem, as he had hinted at Zavidovo. Now he was making a formal and more explicit proposal.

He proposed as well that the U. S. and USSR begin exchanging information on your nuclear program. We said we would not exchange military information and were not interested. Brezhnev then asked if we are prepared to exchange other information on China. We said we could not make one country the subject of regular exchanges. They could always tell us what they had on their minds, but we would make no such undertaking. Brezhnev then said he expected our relations with you to improve, and that they could not object to this. But if military arrangements were made between the U. S. and the PRC, this would have the most serious consequences and would lead the Soviets to take drastic measures. Those were the key points.

They asked if we were planning any military arrangements. We replied three times that we have made no military arrangements, but we said nothing about the future. We do this as a question of principle. Neither of us has any plans along these lines, but we don't believe the Soviets can tell us with whom we can have arrangements.

The meeting was between Brezhnev, the President, myself, and the Soviet interpreter. We have told no one in our Government of this conversation. It must be kept totally secret. We have not told Ambassador Bruce, but I would have no objection if, when you return, you talk to Ambassador Bruce about it. But no one else should be present.

Ambassador Huang: I won't say anything to Bruce. You discuss it when you are there. As for us, as the President said to me last time, the Chinese side is very careful.

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Dr. Kissinger: Brezhnev told us that only those in the room would hear of this conversation. But that evening, Gromyko asked to see me and asked what I thought of the Brezhnev conversation. (laughter)

He asked if I understood Brezhnev's proposal about China. I said that I understood it to have something to do with military arrangements between us. Gromyko then said I had misunderstood. Brezhnev not only meant military arrangements, but also political arrangements directed against the USSR. I asked what was meant by political arrangements, and who determined whether they were directed against the USSR. Gromyko was very evasive. I then called his attention to the Shanghai Communique and told him that we had an understanding not to make agreements directed at other parties.

It is my impression that the Soviet Union was quite serious about some of the matters we discussed previously. They were more openly brazen and brutal than I would have thought possible.

Under these conditions we think it is very important that we understand each other and what our intentions are. Your Prime Minister mentioned to Ambassador Bruce that you think ~~under~~ the event of a Sino-Soviet war we would give arms and supplies to the Soviet Union. That is absurd. We have no interest in supporting the stronger against the weaker.

Ambassador Huang: The Prime Minister said that?

Dr. Kissinger: (Reading from Ambassador Bruce's cable of June 26)  
"In the beginning, the U. S. would maintain a position of non-involvement, but give military supplies to the USSR. Then, after waiting until China had dragged out the USSR for a period of time, the U. S. would strike the Soviets from behind."

If China was attacked by the USSR, we would certainly cut off all credits to the Soviets. The second part of the Prime Minister's remarks might be true, but certainly not the first part. Under no circumstances would we give military or other supplies to the Soviets if they attacked the PRC. We would certainly cut off all economic ties, but we don't know whether that would be enough.

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We must do the maximum we can to deter an attack on China. I used the Nuclear Agreement in a press conference to say that no attack on China would be conceivable that would not threaten peace and security. There would have been an unbelievable uproar in the Congress without the Agreement. So don't attack the Agreement too much. Give us a chance to use it in the one way we want. I think we have out-manuevered your allies on this one.

I have set up a very secret group of four or five of the best officers I can find to see what the U.S. could do if such an event occurred. This will never be publicly known. I tell it to you in the strictest confidence. The group is only being formed this week. I talked to the Chairman of the JCS about it when he was here this week. I am prepared to exchange views on this subject if it can be done in secret.

Further, I have talked to the French Foreign Minister about our interest in strengthening the PRC. We will do what we can to encourage our allies to speed up requests they receive from you on items for Chinese defense.

In particular, you have asked for some Rolls Royce technology. Under existing regulations we have to oppose this, but we have worked out a procedure with the British where they will go ahead anyway. We will take a formal position in opposition, but only that. Don't be confused by what we do publicly. In the future, now that we have our military establishment understanding the problem, we can handle these problems in a different way.

When I come to Peking I think we should discuss this complex of issues rather seriously. That is, how we can do the maximum to deter an attack without providing an excuse to undertake it.

You above all should understand what our policy is. If we wanted to cooperate with the USSR, then we would not have to be so complicated. We are trying to gain time and be in a position for maximum resistance should it happen. This is our position. I must say that we considered our discussions with the Soviets quite ominous.

Ambassador Huang: I will report to my Government. As to the US-Soviet Nuclear Agreement, I have already told you our position.

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Dr. Kissinger: I know. It does not give us any great pain. It would be worse if you supported the Agreement. I just want you to understand our position. But don't tell our Congressmen that it is just a scrap of paper. We want to use it. You can criticize it in other ways.

Ambassador Huang: Our Prime Minister said that?

Dr. Kissinger: Our newspapers so report. As I have said, we don't object to criticism. The Soviets would think something was wrong otherwise.

Ambassador Huang: Our experience has been that it means nothing to the Soviets when they sign a paper.

Dr. Kissinger: I understand. Its purpose is in terms of our own problems; it has no impact on the Russians. But if I had said an attack on China threatened the U.S., there would have been a major uproar in the absence of the Agreement. But with the Agreement it was possible to say this relatively quietly.

I have to talk to the press now. What should I say about our meeting? That we had a review of the situation, and that we had a friendly talk? Nothing more specific? Do they know you are returning to China?

Ambassador Huang: Not yet.

Dr. Kissinger: The press will now say I have upset you so much you are returning to China.

Ambassador Huang: Others will say that I am so happy that I am returning to report.

(Break for meeting with the press and the President.)

Dr. Kissinger: I have just had a report from Ambassador Bruce about the Prime Minister's meeting with the Congressmen. He did say what I reported, but he was provoked by our side. He did not volunteer his comments, they insisted on raising it. We understand that he has no choice but to express his view when asked. Then the Senators repeated it to the newsmen.

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Our Congressmen do not have a capacity for keeping confidential information, and Senator Magnuson knows nothing about foreign policy, which makes it worse. We will have a chance to deal with it in our channels.

We have told you our views on Korea. I suppose that the Prime Minister will discuss it with me when I get there.

Ambassador Huang: Did Dr. Kissinger see what our Prime Minister said about Korea at the Mali reception? He supported Kim Il Sung's 5 points.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes, but that was a general statement. Now, however, we have to decide how we will deal with specifics -- UNCURK and the UNC -- over the coming years.

Ambassador Huang: You can discuss this in Peking.

Dr. Kissinger: You mentioned in an earlier conversation the possibility of an exchange of chancery sites. It is complicated legally, but we would be prepared to facilitate an exchange when you are ready.

Ambassador Huang: I am grateful for your concern. I wanted to discuss the general problem at a convenient time anyway. An exchange of property for a chancery is not an immediate problem, but I do need to ask your help now in obtaining an office building.

We have located 4 houses near each other -- near S Street and Massachusetts Avenue. We have looked over hotels but find that they will not work. Now we have learned that office work is not possible in the area where the 4 houses are located because of zoning restrictions. So we have 2 requests.

First, can you help us find an office building near the 4 houses? We would then use the 4 houses as residences. The houses are located at 1) 2230 S Street (to be used as the Ambassador's Residence); 2) 2200 S Street; 3) 2301 S Street; 4) 2339 S Street.

Second, can we get permission to use these houses for offices? We had been dealing with the Ramada Inn but when they heard we were interested they raised their price and are now asking far too much. So, can we find a small hotel or apartment (50 rooms or so) for our office work and for some of our staff to live in?

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Dr. Kissinger: We will try two things: First, to get the zoning regulations removed from one of the buildings you have already found. Second, if that is not possible, we will see if we can find some small office building for your use.

Ambassador Huang: But we would still like, if possible, your help in finding a small building of 50 rooms or so.

Dr. Kissinger: We will do what we can. We are not well equipped for efforts of this sort, but we will do what we can.

Ambassador Huang: If any of the Rockefellers have real estate nearby, we would appreciate their help.

Dr. Kissinger: I was thinking precisely along those lines.

About my trip. I had thought of going to Hong Kong to get used to the time change, and then coming in from Hong Kong. Does this cause any problems?

Ambassador Huang: I am sure not. Ambassador Bruce stayed there several days. You should, too. Stay as long as you like. If you want to contact any of our people in Hong Kong, feel free to do so.

Dr. Kissinger: I know about your conversation with Secretary Butz. We will cooperate as much as we can on your purchase of agricultural products. You should know that Brezhnev proposed a five year agreement of 5 million tons of grain per year for five years. We agreed in principle, but went no further.

Ambassador Huang: Yes, I had a good discussion with Secretaries Butz and Dent. Both took a very positive attitude toward the development of relations.

Dr. Kissinger: If you ever encounter bureaucratic problems, let my office know. You will get sympathetic treatment from us.

Ambassador Huang: Secretary Butz mentioned the possibility of having officers in charge of agriculture in each Liaison Office. I have put this proposal to my Government. Personally, it looks sensible to me.

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Dr. Kissinger: [REDACTED]Ambassador Huang: [REDACTED]Dr. Kissinger: [REDACTED]

We were going to invite you to a Sky-Lab launching this month, but I gather that you will not be back in time.

Ambassador Huang: Maybe I could be invited after my return from Peking.

Dr. Kissinger: We would be glad to have Mr. Han Hsu. But perhaps it would be better to wait for your return.

Ambassador Huang: It would be better to wait. With my absence Han Hsu will be quite busy and probably would not be able to leave town.

Dr. Kissinger: Some of our Governors feel they might like to visit the People's Republic of China, too. But we will work this out in other channels.

Ambassador Huang: The Majority Leader of your House of Representatives estimated to me recently that too many Americans will want to visit China.

I want to emphasize again that our bitter experience with the Russians has lead us to a position where we do not believe in any treaties or agreements made with them.

Dr. Kissinger: We have no illusions about the Russians. The trick is to seem to be a fool without being one.

Ambassador Huang: You are certainly very good at it. Brezhnev looks on Dr. Kissinger as a dangerous man.

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Dr. Kissinger: Frankly, I have kept my views confused so far as the Russians are concerned, but I think they caught on this trip. They went to great lengths to see the President alone and to get negotiations going separately with the Secretary of State. They did not succeed in either attempt.

Ambassador Huang: I don't know Brezhnev, but I do know Gromyko.

Dr. Kissinger: Brezhnev is not of the quality of your leaders. He is crude. Gromyko, though, is very intelligent.

Ambassador Huang: On the matter of housing again. I would appreciate it if you can find something for us in the area I mentioned. We would use one of our buildings for consular work and one for cultural activities. There would be no outward sign of the purposes of these buildings. In other words, we really need two buildings for office purposes. We want to respect your laws but hope something can be done. Also, we would not want any of our buildings to be within sight of the Chiang Embassy.

Dr. Kissinger: We will do what we can.

(Break)

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